

Our October 30 Newsflash covered the release of proposed new Urban Design Guidelines (“UDG”) for Queen Street East by City Planning Staff.

In this update we reaffirm that saving Queen Street is a common goal shared by all groups and residents in our community. There are, however, different opinions on how best to accomplish this goal. The following notes speak more fully to the reasons why support for the proposed UDG is a matter of urgency to protect Queen Street.

### **Time is of the essence**

Saving Queen Street is not a matter for relaxed study, there are imminent development pressures. Applications have already been submitted for development at the NE and NW corners of Queen and Woodbine. As well, a number of adjacent Queen Street properties are in single ownership hands and the Queen Street / Lee Avenue corner is a prime “soft site” on the longer horizon.

The development approved for the Licks site (which is currently under appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board) is a reminder of the uncertainty and confusion perceived by many in the community about the current development rules along Queen Street in the Beach. The proposed UDG provide a remedy for this situation in a balanced fashion: while they may not go far enough for some, they are acceptable for many, and will provide much-needed certainty about the design standards which should be applied to future developments.

### **Why not delay for a better outcome?**

A notion has been circulating that more time will result in better or more restrictive guidelines and that an Interim Control Bylaw (ICBL) can keep development at bay in the meantime.

The possibility of an ICBL for Queen Street East has been raised, with no success, a number of times with the City in the past year. There seems little reason to expect any change in the City’s position on an ICBL.

Delaying the adoption of the proposed UDG invites a large degree of uncertainty. Given the urgency to save Queen Street, proposing a delay without addressing the very real potential for downside risk would be irresponsible. This is the reason why GBNA recommends against any delay in adopting the proposed UDG by City Council.

### **What has the community achieved?**

For the section east of Woodbine, where the unique flavour of Queen Street is at the greatest risk, this is what the guidelines offer:

1. A maximum height of 12.5 metres on shallow lots (four storeys)
2. A maximum height of 15.5 metres for development at Queen/Lee and the majority of all other lots along Queen Street (35m deep).
3. A maximum ‘streetwall’ height of 3 storeys, with aggressively ‘terraced’ higher floors to create a visual impression of 4 storeys maximum.

- 4 'Terracing' applicable along the side street portion of corner properties
- 5 'Chamfering' of corner properties to create additional pedestrian space
- 6 Design standards to avoid the 'glass condo' effect

### **Zoning versus UDG**

Some residents may be under the misperception that the UDG replaces the zoning by-law and that the UDG will simply be seen as a starting point for higher or larger development. This is not the case.

The UDG will provide guidelines that will be used in the review of applications for re-zoning by a developer. The community can reasonably expect that City Council, having adopted the UDG and advised all staff to use the guidelines in the review of development applications, will not be supportive of applications for developments which exceed the height, built form and other standards contained in the UDG.

### **Traffic, parking, water management, etc**

The scope of the Visioning Study did not include important infrastructure concerns such as traffic, parking, storm-water management and more. Councillor McMahon has made a commitment to GBNA to begin detailed reviews of these items with the community.

The first priority is storm water management, given the extent of basement flooding in our area. GBNA has formed a Workgroup, with an expectation of first meetings with City Staff in the next 30 days.

### **Summary**

As a result of its work with member associations, Councillor McMahon and City Planning staff, GBNA

- supports the proposed UDG for Queen Street East in the Beach as they reflect a balanced outcome of the Visioning study;
- urges the adoption of the proposed UDG as a matter of priority;
- is in the process of organizing community workgroups to address pressing infrastructure issues of traffic, parking, storm-water management, etc;
- has received a commitment from City Planning staff and Councillor McMahon that the proposed UDG will be applied in the review of all new developments on Queen Street East, including the ones at the corners of Queen and Woodbine; and
- will be seeking meetings with the developers of the properties at the corners of Queen and Woodbine with a view to implementation of the guidelines.

GBNA recommends that Toronto and East York Community Council adopts the proposed UDG at its session on November 6, given the imminent development pressures on Queen Street in the Beach.

On behalf of the GBNA steering group and the GBNA Visioning study workgroup, thank you for your interest in this very important topic!

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